

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, immediately after the title "MATERIALS HANDLING SYSTEM", please insert –

Related Applications This application claims the benefit of the Australian application PQ 1810 filed June 9, 1999 and the international application PCT/AU00/00646 filed June 8, 2000.—

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A rail car comprising:
a chassis adapted to travel on a track;
a longitudinally extending container having a closeable opening for loading or unloading material through at least one longitudinal end thereof; and
an interconnector adapted to enable interconnected displacement of the container relative to the chassis to permit loading via the closeable opening wherein the container is adapted to stably withstand the compression of the waste material within the container.
2. (Amended) The rail car of claim 1 wherein the interconnector comprises a bearing between the container and chassis such that the container is selectively rotatable relative to the chassis.
3. (Amended) The rail car of Claim 1, wherein both of the longitudinal ends have a closeable opening for loading or unloading material.
4. (Amended) A materials handling system including:
a rail car having a chassis adapted to travel on a track;
a longitudinally extending container for compacted material, the container having a closeable opening for loading or unloading material through at least one longitudinal end thereof, and an interconnector adapted to enable interconnected displacement of the container relative to the chassis to permit in situ loading via the closeable opening;
a loader at a materials collection point for loading material into the container through the opening;
a track for the rail car extending from the collection point to a remote distribution point; and

an unloader at the distribution point for unloading material from the container through the opening wherein the container is displaced relative to the chassis to operatively engage the loader and again displaced when unloading the material.

5. (Amended) The materials handling system of Claim 4, wherein the interconnector comprises a bearing between the container and the chassis such that the container is selectively rotatable relative to the chassis.

6. (Amended) The materials handling system of Claim 4 wherein the material is loaded and unloaded through the closable opening.

7. (Amended) The materials handling system of Claim 4, wherein the material is metropolitan waste and the collection point is a regional transfer station wherein the loader includes a compactor for compressing the waste.

8. (Amended) The materials handling system of Claim 7, wherein at least one stabilizer is provided to support and stabilize the rail car against forces generated by the compactor.

9. (Amended) The materials handling system of Claim 4, wherein the distribution point is adjacent a land fill site and the unloader comprises a hydraulically actuated telescopic ram capable of engaging the compressed waste through one opening in the container and pushing the waste out an opening in the other end of the container.

10. (Amended) The materials handling system of Claim 9, wherein the telescopic ram pushes the compressed waste out of the other end of the container into the trailer of a heavy haulage truck.

11. (Amended) The materials handling system of Claim 10, wherein the trailer of the heavy haulage truck is provided with a conveyor along a floor of the trailer for unloading the waste into the land fill site.

12. (Amended) A method of transporting material between a collection point and a distribution point by rail using a rail car having a chassis adapted to travel on a track, a longitudinally extending container having a closeable opening for loading or unloading material through at least one longitudinal end thereof, and an interconnector adapted to permit interconnected displacement of the container relative to the chassis to permit in situ loading via the closeable opening, the method comprising:

providing a loader at the collection point;

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displacing the container relative to the chassis to operatively engage the loader and loading material through the opening;

returning the container to its original position relative to the chassis and transporting the rail car along the track to the distribution point;

providing an unloader at the distribution point; and

displacing the container relative to the chassis to operatively engage the unloader and unloading the material.

13. (Amended) The method of Claim 12 wherein the interconnector comprises a bearing between the container and the chassis such that the container is selectively rotatable relative to the chassis.

14. (Amended) The method of Claim 12 wherein the material is loaded and unloaded through the closable opening.

15. (Amended) The method of Claim 12 wherein the material is metropolitan waste and the collection point is a regional transfer station the method further comprising compressing the waste with a compactor.

16. (Amended) The method of Claim 15 further comprising stabilizing the rail car against forces generated by the compactor.

17. (Amended) The method of Claim 12 wherein the distribution point is adjacent a land fill site and the unloader is a hydraulically actuated telescopic ram the method further comprising engaging the compressed waste through one opening in the container and pushing it out an opening in the other end of the container.

18. (Amended) The method of Claim 17 further comprising pushing the compressed waste out of the other end of the container into the trailer of a heavy haulage truck.

19. (Amended) The method of Claim 18 further comprising conveying the waste along the floor of the trailer so as to unload the waste into the land fill site.